



January, 2009

Dear Members and Friends of the VPC,

Happy New Year! On behalf of the Steering Committee and staff of the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles, we would like to present a brief end-of-year report of our 2008 accomplishments.

As you will see, we were able to accomplish much on a volunteer basis. Now that we have been successful in hiring staff, we expect 2009 to be even more productive and effective at reducing violence in our communities. The VPC website is back on-line (www.vpcgla.org), and will be a source of information on the actions and accomplishments of our members, and will provide the schedules of our trainings and other events. We have also taken residence at the California Endowment's Center for Healthy Communities facility near Downtown LA. Our phone number there is (213) 346-3237. Please feel free to stop by if you are at the Center or just in the neighborhood.

Here's to a prosperous and violence-free 2009!

Ellen Sanchez
Chair, Steering Committee

Bill Martinez
Coalition Manager

Billie Weiss
Founder

2008 END OF YEAR REPORT

The members of the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles have been moving forward in the effort to prevent violence using a public health approach. The VPC is pleased to report the following announcements and accomplishments:

The VPC hired a Coalition Manager and Outreach Coordinator and has secured office space at Community Partners. Bill Martinez, the new Coalition Manager, has been serving as the Vice Chair of the Steering Committee and has been a long time member of the VPC. He has been involved in violence reduction for 15 years, primarily through involvement in gang intervention programs and was a co-author of the Advancement Project's L.A. Gang Reduction Strategy Report. Gilbert Salinas, the new Outreach Coordinator, was a former Chair of the VPC and has also been a long time member. He was most recently the Outreach Director of the Know Barriers Violence Prevention Program at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. Gilbert has started meeting with existing members to reconnect with them and encourage greater participation in the Coalition. He is conducting a survey to assess their past experience with the VPC and their current interests. The staff will operate out of the VPC's new office located at Community Partners in Downtown Los Angeles.

VPC members have collaborated to impact local and state policy. On October 30, the VPC conducted a press conference to present conditions that would be affected by passage of Proposition 6 on the California state-wide ballot for November 4. The event drew several media stations and a large crowd that spilled over into the street. The VPC members are pleased that the proposition did not pass, which would have diverted necessary funding for prevention programs to increase spending on law enforcement and incarceration. VPC Members



have also formed a Policy Committee. The Policy Committee will review and analyze violence-related legislation and policy developments in order to provide information to the Steering Committee and the membership. This group will also work to provide tools and resources to the membership to enable them to effectively advocate for legislative and policy change at all levels.

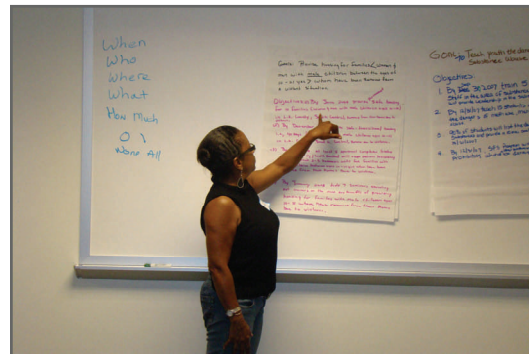
The VPC Re-Entry and Employment Action Group hosted "Opening Doors: Developing Community Strategies for Youthful Offenders," a symposium to explore and address gaps in services for youthful offenders re-entering their communities. Connie Rice of the Advancement Project gave the keynote address and David Steinhart of Commonweal presented on the implications of CA Senate Bill 81. Panels consisting of individuals who have interacted with the criminal justice system, service providers, groups currently working with this population, and individuals involved with state and local policy for re-entry issues, brought a personal perspective to the issue of incarcerating youth. Approximately 125 people attended the event.

VPC members met bimonthly to explore and address pressing issues facing Los Angeles.

- *Legitimizing Violence: Is the U.S. Military Training the Abusers of Tomorrow Today?*
- LA City Controller Laura Chick presents on *A Blueprint for a Comprehensive City-Wide Anti-Gang Strategy*
- Community Engagement Advisory Committee presents on *Community-based Gang Intervention Model: Definition and Structure*
- David Steinhart presents on *Proposition 6 – The 'Safe Neighborhoods Act' What does it do? What should you do about it?* And Billie Weiss presents *A public health view of Proposition 6*
- Sheila Kuehl, former member of the California State Senate, presents her *State of the State Address*
- A resource fair for members to network with colleagues and funders, showcase their programs and agencies, and learn about what community resources are available
- VPC members present on *Street Outreach Programs, Strategies and Solutions for Preventing Gun Violence and Harm, The Importance of Program Evaluation, and Effective Violence Prevention Coalitions* at The California Wellness Foundation's 16th Annual Conference on Violence Prevention.

2008 END OF YEAR REPORT

Program evaluation training for VPC member organizations has continued. Workshops are offered by the Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center at the UCLA School of Public Health and funded by The California Wellness Foundation. Over the course of the year, thirty-nine individuals from twenty-seven member organizations have received training in program evaluation. These workshops consist of four four-hour sessions and cover writing measurable objectives, identifying sources of data, and developing an evaluation plan to monitor and measure outcomes of a project or a program. Participants are encouraged to avail themselves of free technical assistance as they implement what they have learned in the workshops. These workshops will continue in 2009.



VPC's Letter to President-Elect Barack Obama

Dear President-elect Obama:

I am writing this to introduce you to the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles. We are a coalition of many organizations and individuals who are devoted to the application of public health methods to the reduction and prevention of violence in our communities.

"Public health methods" denote that we consider violence as we do a communicable disease; that is, violent behavior is not an end in itself, but the result of contributing conditions, such as previous violence in the home, lack of education, absence of good parental models, alcoholism, dependence on gang membership for security, and the like.

Although we acknowledge that there are many individuals who are beyond rehabilitation, we are aware that prevention can bring boys and girls, men and women, into our society's mainstream for productive lives, at a far lower cost than that of lifelong incarceration.

Our staff and membership, from public health professionals to gang intervention workers, city attorneys to probation officers, and emergency room surgeons to parents of murdered children, hope that you will call on us and our prevention allies across the nation to address what has been until now a national disaster.

*Respectfully,
Ellen Sanchez
Chair*

Berkeley Media Studies Group and the Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center provided media advocacy trainings to help VPC members engage in advocacy on violence prevention issues. To date, three trainings have been provided by Lori Dorfman of Berkeley Media Studies Group courtesy of The California Endowment. Participating VPC members were guided through each step of developing a media advocacy plan: setting goals and objectives, identifying strategies and tactics, assessing resources, determining timelines and specifying who will do what. Participants also learned to integrate communications planning organizationally and plan for timely, proactive news coverage.



The VPC is offering Challenge Grants to members and is re-establishing the VPC Youth Coalition, comprised of and led by youth. Ten \$2,500 grants will be awarded to VPC member agencies that serve or work with youth. The youth will create and implement projects using the public health approach to promote peace in Los Angeles communities. Two representatives from each agency awarded a Challenge Grant will be asked to participate in the VPC Youth Coalition. The purpose of the VPC Youth Coalition is to empower the youth to become leaders in advocating for violence prevention. The youth will identify strategies, ideas, and solutions to violence in their communities and will be trained on skills like conducting presentations, advocacy, and outreach.

2008 END OF YEAR REPORT

The VPC congratulates Billie Weiss, the founder of the VPC, who received The California Wellness Foundation's 2008 California Peace Prize Award. The award recognizes leaders in California who have made outstanding contributions to prevent violence and promote peace in their local communities.



Photo by Robert Pacheco

“Things are not changing fast enough. We need everybody we can muster...to build that critical mass of people that can tip this epidemic so that we really look at prevention and community building as opposed to locking youth up.”

-Billie Weiss, VPC Founder

The VPC wishes to thank the following agencies for supporting the work of the Coalition:

The California Endowment
The California Wellness Foundation
The Doris Factor Endowment Fund

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center
At the UCLA School of Public Health

The VPC continues to advocate for a public health approach to violence prevention. Its membership is as diverse as Los Angeles County and is dedicated to building the critical mass to shift from suppression, enforcement, and incarceration to the much more cost effective and lasting solutions of prevention and intervention.

